

To: Graduate Council
From: Graduate Curriculum Committee
Date: March 7, 2013
Re: Discussion at GCC Meeting March 6, 2013

A course proposal package brought before the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) at the March 6th meeting resulting in a prolonged period of discussion and discomfort given the inability of the parties involved to reach a mutually acceptable decision.

The College of Health and Human Performance, Department of Health Education and Promotion submitted a proposal for course changes that included the words “environmental health and safety.” The graduate faculty of that department provided important rationale and support for the words used in both the course titles and descriptions. The graduate faculty from the College of Technology and Computer Science, Department of Technology Systems, specifically the Master of Science in Occupational Safety, strongly objected to the terms and provided a legitimate case for the possible confusion that would result from the common “branding” that the phrase connotes as well as support from their certifying agencies for the changing of this phrase. The GCC chair asked representatives from both programs to meet before the 03-06-13 GCC meeting to resolve their differences.

Prior to the GCC meeting, representatives of the departments met, but could not come to an agreement; and, the conflict along with the course proposals came as agenda items to the committee. The two departments were unable to alleviate the stalemate which resulted in a conundrum among the committee members and perhaps further divided the people involved.

The richness that could result from the collaboration and cooperation of these departments, as well as others across the East Carolina University campus that may find themselves in a semantic dispute, was not an outcome. The GCC is not the proper forum to adjudicate differences of opinion between departments. For the clarity and quality of education for all of our students some means of resolving such differences and considering realigning programs should be done prior to curriculum submission, when possible. Addressing the broader programmatic issues by appropriate administrative or academic means can promote clarity, enhance faculty collegiality, and ensure a quality education for all of our students.